WHAT THE CAR WHEELS SANG.

With a scream of the whistle our farewell said,
And into the blackness of night we sped
On and on
To meet the dawn,
Under the sky where the stars burned red;
Past hills that stood where the snows were shed,
Ghostly white as the shrouded dead;
On and on
To meet the dawn;
True hand at the throttle and hope ahead!
The steel rails ringing—
The swift wheels singing:
'To kith and kin, O hearts that roam—
In vine-wreathed cot, and marble dome,
Over the world we bear you home!

Whirled through the dark where the black steed drives
Are joys and sorrows of human lives;
Laughter and weeping,
And children sleeping
On the breasts of glad mothers; and wistful wives;
The clank of chains and the grip of gyves!
On and on
To meet the dawn
Where Light the soul of the Darkness shrives!
The steel rails ringing—
The mad wheels singing:
"To gloam or gladness, O hearts that roam—
To darkened dwelling or marble dome
Over the world we bear you home!"

There are hearts that listen with hope and fear
For the signal thrill of the engineer;
That throb and thrill
At that signal shrill;
Does it bring them the rose or the rue to wear?
The song, the sigh, or the burning tear?
On and on
To meet the dawn—
The black night dies, and the hills stand clear!
"What are you bringing,
Oh swift wheels singing—
O daisied meadow and dew-sweet loam?"
"The hearts that hunger—the hearts that roam—
Over the world we bear them home!"

Old friends, old lovers, in a rapture wild—
Kiss of the mother and clasp of the child;
The night is gone—
We have met the dawn;
Never so gladly the sweet sun smiled!
Never the spirit of night beguiled
The hand so true,
That the throttle knew—
Bearing the burden of mother and child
On and on
To the joy o' the dawn!
With ever that song to the hearts that roam—
"To vine-wreathed cot and marble dome
Over the world we bear you home!"
—F. L. Stanton, in Atlanta Constitution.

Not a Writing Man

By Constance Cotterell.

THE Boy stood and looked and looked at the Girl. It was by no means the first time he had met her, and he would have been extremely glad to know that it was the last. That is to say, he would have wished, of all things in the world, never to part from her again. But this, he acknowledged to himself, was past hoping for. All her people were so clever, everybody she knew had written something or other, she was only used to the very most intellectual persons. Why, even this party that he was now at was given in the great room at the end of her father's garden where he wrote his wonderful books. And he—he was such a countrified fellow. He only had money and a ridiculous, quite intellectually useless strength of body. He could only shoot and hunt, and play games, and manage dogs and horses. Boorish pursuits, he thought, despairingly. Once he brightened for a moment as he looked round the crowd of nervous, narrow-shouldered men.

"I'd bet anything not one of 'em could bring down a pheasant at a hundred yards!" he said, and almost chuckled to himself.

Nobody took any notice of him. He felt that he had hardly any right to be there. If he had taken a composition prize at school, or even so much as written a letter to the papers, he felt that he need not have stood there so ashamed. Once She in her capacity as young hostess had come and spoken to him. Very shyly. What single thing in common with her could such a stupid fellow as he have? And so she had left him alone after taking him to one or two girls whom he supposed to embody genius in its most terrible form, the feminine specimen, and who therefore found, and left, him dumb.

So he wandered off into a far corner, for it was a large room, and when he had put himself behind a small grove of portfolios he could watch her without being seen or being in anybody's way. For a long time he gazed at her, very fair and in white, with what he called a lump of black velvet against her shining white shoulder. Then at last she was lost to him in a throng far away at the other end of the room. He turned his back on everybody, and looked with a curious, ingenuous wonder at some Inca drawings which were in the corner on the wall.

He did not observe that the noise of voices grew less and less, and then ceased altogether. He was lost in a dream of Her until suddenly he was awakened by the electric lights going out altogether and the sound of a key turning in the lock of the door. He listened acutely then, and heard the gay voices growing fainter outside, as the guests went along the Chinese lanterned path into the house to supper. He started out of his corner to rush for the door and try to make somebody hear him. But he entangled himself among the portfolio stands with a loud noise, and when he extricated himself and felt cautiously round in the darkness for landmarks he found that he had lost his bearings. The sounds outside died away.

He stood still and wondered what he should do. And where was She? What more worthy man was handing her to supper? His teeth came together at the thought. It had been his one final daring hope, to take her into supper this very last time—and then retire to vegetate and slowly die in the empty country. And even this had been denied him. He felt a chair near and sat heavily down.

Then his sharpened senses seemed to take in a breath and a soft rustle a very long way off, and there came a low, sweet voice: "Are you there, Mr. Penwin?"

Rapture. "Are you?" was all he could say, and he bounded from his chair.

She laughed gently. "Yes, I—I got left behind—as you did, you know!"

"I can't imagine how I did it," he said.

"You were dreaming something beautiful in your corner—"

"I was!" he cried out, eagerly, and began to make his stumbling way toward her voice.

"—something that I shall perhaps read some day in a great book?" she breathed, softly.

He stopped groping with a gasp. Heavens! this was worse than anything. She took him—him, for a writer! He blushed as he stood there in the darkness. And, of course, how could she suppose that any guest of her father had not written, or was not about to write, some world-stirring masterpiece? It thrilled him for a moment to think she had thought him capable even for an instant of writing something, anything. But the despair was all the flatter afterward. Well, it certainly was all over now; the only thing was to get away from her as quickly and with as little betrayal of his stupidity as possible. So he blundered out:

"Tell me what I can do to let you out."

"Us," she said, very gently, he thought.

"Us," he echoed, and his heart seemed to him to stop beating as he said it. That she should put herself into one word with him and say "us!"

"There aren't any windows," she said, in a voice that struck him as oddly calm, coming through the tumult of his feelings. "Father has it lighted from the top, so that he shan't see anything to distract his thoughts, or we could have got out that way."

"Does he, really?" said Penwin, in overflowing admiration of this iron type of genius. "Splendid man!"

"Do you think so?" she said, slowly. "I think the blue sky or the great clouds and the trees and flowers would help to make one's thoughts beautiful—and true."

He became more ashamed than ever, feeling that her reverence for poetic things was high, indeed.

The only thing he could think of to say was: "Where are the switches? Can't I turn on the light?"

"Outside." Then she laughed gayly. "I'm afraid we really are locked up till they remember us!"

"We!" "Us!" It wrought upon him so that he could hardly bear it. Surely she did not understand what she was doing to him! "If you only knew," he began, recklessly, and then pulled himself up.

"What?"

"Oh—you know everything!"

"Indeed, no; there are some things I would like very much to know." He heard that she sighed softly. This was torment. Why was he not a learned man, so that she could have asked him and he could have told her?

"I—I think I noticed a candle on that table," he stammered, dismally. "The one with the prickly edge."

"Yes, if one only knew where it was," she said. "I'm quite lost, aren't you?"

"Quite," he said, forlornly.

"I don't know where anything is."

"I do."

"What?"

"You," he said, simply.

"That's an idea," she said, as if it were an agreeable one.

"What? How?" he cried, in delight. Was it possible, then, that he had ideas without recognizing them?

"If we find each other we shall at any rate have found something."

He was speechless. Then he said, almost trembling.

"May I come to you?"

"Y-e-es," she said. And well might she hesitate in that heavenly, dainty way, he thought. To find him was but a poor hope for her, even if to find her was to him just everything.

He heard again the soft rustle.

"Are you coming to me?" he asked, incredulous of his joy.

"Of course. I must meet you half way."

"If you could—Oh, if you would—"

"I am doing it," she said, and laughed softly again.

He heard several bumps and noises close to his own knees and shins and supposed that he was making them with his own person, but he could not take account of that when she was "coming half way." Next moment his hand grasped a soft one, put out to feel its way. Before he or she could stop he had touched her, herself, and his nostrils caught up the scent of her hair.

She withdrew from him with a soft surprised "Oh!"

He, too, could only echo the "Oh," and the hand loosed itself from his longing hand that dared not keep it.

Neither spoke for awhile. He feared he should never be forgiven, and even furiously wished that he had written something. Then he would have had a right at least to want to touch her.

"I think I am standing near the table where the candle was," she said faintly at last.

He found his matchbox in humble silence. There was only one match in it, and he struck it. It turned out to be the wrong table, but he succeeded in bringing the match alight to the candle, though he really did not see it. He only saw her. She was pale, he thought. She must be very angry. The candle had been, so it happened, pinched with a wet finger the night before. It sputtered and spat in a vixenish manner and went angrily out. The match, too. There was silence again.

"Well, we saw how we were standing," she said. Her voice was very low.

"Yes," so was his.

"But I don't seem to remember—"

"Nor do I!"

Another silence.

"It's so annoying," he ventured.

"It is," she said, but quite softly.

"So horrid for you!"

"So tiresome for you," she was saying at the same time.

"Oh, I don't mind."

"And, you see, it's—it's my father's room," she added, in an explanatory manner, so that he could not but feel that something had been explained. He would have been glad to have been told what.

"I suppose we can talk?" she said, nervously.

"Yes."

There was a long silence. He heard that she sat down and he moved close to her silently.

"I suppose—" he began, desperately.

"Oh!" she cried.

"Yes?"

"I didn't think you were so near!"

"Did I frighten you?" How he forbore to call her "dearest" he did not know.

"Oh, no."

"Then?"

"It startled me. But I think I like to have you near. It's so dark."

"It is—very dark." He came nearer. It was delicious to think she could be afraid of the dark. He had feared she was too clever.

"What were you going to say?" she asked.

"I suppose," he said, despair coming on again. "I suppose there wasn't anybody here to-night who hadn't written a book?"

"Most of them, several." He fancied she sighed again. It must be boredom this time to think of the brilliant people at supper while she was shut up with him. He fancied that it was with an effort she turned to him and said:

"And when's your book coming out?" She did speak wearily.

"I—I don't know," he stammered.

"You are a slow writer, then?"

"I can't even spell!" he blurted out.

"Oh, I don't know that that makes any difference."

There was another silence. Then she appeared to make another effort.

"And you really can't tell me when it would be of any use putting it on my list?"

"Oh, how can I bear it?" His voice came out of a dream.

She supposed his work had not been accepted and reproached herself for conversational clumsiness. And then somehow went on to make it worse.

"They generally don't mind," she said.

"Mind what?" he murmured.

"Being refused."

He felt himself grow burning hot.

"Have I been refused?" he stammered.

"You know."

"I didn't dream I had dared—I don't understand. How did you guess what I—"

"It's so usual," she said.

He found he was fighting for breath.

"But you mustn't mind," she said, with sudden kindness. "You must be proud, and say like the others, that it's gross blindness and prejudice, and that somebody else will recognize your merit."

"The—the others?" he stammered. "What others?"

"All those who have been refused."

"Were—were there many?"

"Hundreds."

Penwin laid hold hard of the edge of her chair.

"But you mustn't mind so much. Indeed, you mustn't, dear Mr. Penwin. Everybody begins by being refused. Please don't mind so."

"How can I help?" he demanded, almost with a sob.

She put out a ministering hand and it met his cheek, which was bowed down. There was a tear on it. He seized the hand and kissed it, and then, they neither of them knew how, he was on his knees by her side.

"Make up to me for it—a little," he said. "It is as hard as death."

Her hand was still in both of his. He felt a subtle change in it. It quivered, and then seemed consciously to surrender itself to him. He kissed it again.

"After all," she said, by and by, in a new voice, "somehow I should not have thought you were a writing man."

"Why not?"

"You don't look like it, you know."

"I don't," he admitted, miserably.

"And you never ask how much So and So got for So and So, and you never seem annoyed at anybody's book being a success, and you never say a good thing and then seem to think you've wasted it, and you don't talk about form and local color and—"

"You see," he pleaded, "I'm quite a novice!"

"And always when you came into the room there seemed to come a breath from the mountains where nobody hunts for unusual words and where one can live with real and beautiful things instead of writing about them, and I—liked that."

He was so sad and so happy that he was dumb.

"D'you know, I'd—I'd rather you didn't write!"

"Dulcie!" He had never dared even to think of her by her name, but now it seemed the one word in the whole world that belonged to his lips. "Dulcie!"

"Yes," she whispered.

"Don't you like writing men?"

"I'm sick to death of them."

"Could you like a man who couldn't put two words together?" he panted.

"I'm afraid I do."

"Could you—could you love him?"

"I'm afraid I do."

For one sharp moment happiness seemed a greater agony than despair. Then he leaned his face to hers, and the agony was gone.—Good Words.

No Danger for Him.

"Did you see that story about the man who got a needle in his arm while trying to kiss a girl?" he asked.

"No," she replied, and then she added, fervently: "But, thank heaven! I never learned to sew."—Chicago Post.